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# PARIS PAPER SAYS THE FRENCH SANK GREENPEACE BOAT

## Le Monde Suggests Attack in New Zealand Was Staged by Military Saboteurs

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Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Sept. 17 — A leading French newspaper reported today that the sinking of the anti-nuclear protest vessel Rainbow Warrior was the work of a team of French military divers, and that the Defense Minister apparently had approved the operation.

The newspaper, Le Monde, quoting what it said were sources in the French secret service as well as Government officials and others, asserted that this information was subsequently concealed from an official inquiry ordered by President François Mitterrand.

The Defense Minister, Charles Hernu, rejected the report in Le Monde tonight as part of "the campaign of rumors and insinuations being waged against French military officials over the attack on the Rainbow Warrior."

### Man Killed in Sinking

One man was killed when the vessel, the flagship of the environmentalist group Greenpeace, was sunk July 10 by explosives while berthed in Auckland, New Zealand. The ship was going to lead a protest flotilla to the French nuclear testing site at Mururoa Atoll. New Zealand police investigators concluded that mines had been attached to the Rainbow Warrior's hull.

Le Monde said the divers who sank the vessel were members of a secret "third team" of French military saboteurs directed by the French secret service. This team, the article said, slipped into New Zealand for the sabotage mission, then escaped undetected.

### Similar Account in Weekly

Shortly after the incident, a man and a woman who were later identified as French intelligence agents, were arrested and charged with the sinking and the death of the Portuguese photographer who was aboard the Rainbow Warrior when it sank. They are in prison in New Zealand awaiting trial.

An account of the Rainbow Warrior's sinking similar to Le Monde's appears in Wednesday's edition of Le Canard Enchaîné, a French satirical weekly that specializes in investigative reporting. Le Monde, the country's authoritative newspaper, is associated by many readers with France's left-of-center political establishment.

The French Government has admitted that it sent spies to New Zealand to monitor the Rainbow Warriors' movements, but has vigorously denied any involvement in its sinking.

The allegations today caused an immediate political storm and appear to be deeply embarrassing to the French Government.

### Contradicts Inquiry Findings

The stories flatly contradict the findings of an official inquiry into allegations of French involvement in the attack that cleared France of any responsibility and carry the burgeoning political scandal to the very top of the Government. The Prime Minister of New Zealand, David Lange, had dismissed the official inquiry as "a whitewash" and had pledged a full investigation by his Government into the incident.

The latest reports are also highly embarrassing to President Mitterrand personally, coming just after he tried to repair the political damage the incident has caused his administration with a highly publicized visit to the Mururoa Atoll last week. While there, he strongly defended France's nuclear testing program.

On his return from Mururoa on Sunday, Mr. Mitterrand described the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior as "an absurd and criminal act" and told reporters that he had no idea who did it.

In his statement tonight, Defense Minister Hernu categorically denied that he gave any order to scuttle the Rainbow Warrior and said he was unaware of any "third team" of French secret agents in New Zealand at the time the boat was sunk.

"Everything will be done to find out the truth," Mr. Hernu said, warning that if anyone has disobeyed orders or lied, he would "ask the Government to take appropriate action."

Prime Minister Laurent Fabius said he stood by his earlier pledge to "take immediate legal action" if any "criminal actions have been taken by French citizens in the Greenpeace affair."

Opposition politicians reacted vigorously to the Le Monde report, warning of a "French Watergate" and demanding that the Government reveal the truth about possible French involvement in the incident.

In Strasbourg, where opposition parliamentarians are meeting, Jean-Claude Gaudin, leader of the U.D.F. center-right group in the French Parliament, which supports former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, described the charges as "very grave" and called on President Mitterrand to "tell the whole truth to the French" and avoid any "coverup."

### Prime Minister Assailed

Charles Pasqua, speaking for the neo-Gaullist R.P.R. party, attacked Premier Fabius, saying he had promised to clear up the scandal and that his "personal responsibility is now at stake."

Le Monde, phrasing its account cautiously and writing in the conditional tense, said its sources had reported that Defense Minister Hernu, Gen. Jeannou Lacaze, the French chief of staff, and Gen. Jean Saulnier, President Mitterrand's personal military adviser, "may have been in the know, having either authorized, according to some sources, or allowed to take place, according to others, an operation designed to eradicate the ecologists campaign and give Greenpeace a warning."

The paper added that for now "it is impossible to know whether these personalities were directly implicated, or whether they were involved only because of misunderstandings and things left unsaid during discussions about Greenpeace."

But the paper said it was told Defense Minister Hernu did not consult President Mitterrand about the French secret service's plans to sink the boat or tell him about its involvement afterward. "The President may at least have been lied to by omission," the paper wrote, adding that he is now being urged by some aides to take "draconian" measures to clear up the scandal.

Continued

### Challenge to Investigation

Le Monde's main allegation directly challenges the central finding of an official French inquiry into the incident conducted in August by Bernard Tricot, a former senior Gaullist civil servant, whom President Mitterrand asked to investigate charges that the French secret service was involved in the sinking.

Mr. Tricot's report exonerated the French Government and the secret service. But his findings were greeted with widespread skepticism in the French press.

Mr. Tricot also acknowledged that he might have been "tricked" during the inquiry and said he did "exclude that there might have been an understanding at a certain level not to tell me all the truth."

Le Monde said today the French Secret Service and the military had given Mr. Tricot false accounts.

Mr. Tricot's report said two separate teams of French agents were sent to New Zealand to spy on the ship and report its movements, but that they did not sink it.

Two of these agents, traveling on forged Swiss passports and calling themselves Mr. and Mrs. Turenge, were arrested by the New Zealand police shortly after the Rainbow Warrior sank and are awaiting trial on charges of sabotage and murder.

According to the Tricot report, the second group of French secret agents, three other people, hurriedly left New Zealand the day before the sinking on

the yacht Ouvéa, which has disappeared.

A third French agent, Christine Cabon, who used the name Frédérique Bonlieu, had earlier infiltrated the Greenpeace movement in New Zealand to gather information about its plans. But she left New Zealand before the Rainbow Warrior arrived.

Le Monde said today that the "third team," of two military divers, whom it said it could not identify, also entered New Zealand just before the attack. The newspaper said the men picked up explosives and diving equipment that had been smuggled in on the Ouvéa, sank the Rainbow Warrior and then fled the country, one flying to Australia, the other to New Caledonia.

Although Le Monde said its sources did not say where the team of saboteurs came from, the paper said it believed they were provided by the French Army underwater combat school at Aspretto in Corsica, which it says works directly with the operations division of the French Secret Service, the Direction General de Securite Exterieur.

Le Monde says the whole operation was headed by Commander Louis Pierre Dillais, whom the paper says is Commandant of the Aspretto underwater combat school.

### Phone Number Called Clue

The two agents calling themselves "Turenge" have already been identified by Mr. Tricot as Comdr. Alain Mafart, deputy commandant of the Aspretto school, and Dominique Prieur, a captain in the secret service.

Le Monde says Commander Mafart and Captain Prieur helped organize the operation and also acted as "decoys" to distract the New Zealand police. But, the paper said, they made the mistake of calling a special emergency telephone number in Paris after they were arrested, leading the New Zealand police to suspect the secret service was involved.